

Running head: A QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF NONCONSENSUAL
PORNOGRAPHY MOTIVATIONS

A Qualitative Examination of Nonconsensual Pornography Motivations Through Perception

Analysis

by

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Abstract (150 words)

Purpose: To establish what the commonly held perceptions are as to why individuals choose to participate in nonconsensual pornography. **Methods:** Using an online survey aimed towards analyzing the perceptions people have towards the causes and rationales of engaging in nonconsensual pornography, a sample of 63 participants from different online platforms were examined. **Results:** The two most common thematic responses for engaging in nonconsensual pornography were “to bully” and “to show off and brag”. In contexts where initial consent was given, the most common thematic responses for engaging in the behavior was because “consent was assumed to be constant and/or carried over” and “for revenge”. **Conclusion:** While the study focuses on hypothetical scenarios of nonconsensual pornography, the study provides insight into the perceptions of what people believe motivates individuals to engage in nonconsensual pornography. This is the first study of its kind to explicitly examine nonconsensual pornography motivations using perception analyses.

Keywords: nonconsensual pornography, revenge porn, sexting, perception analysis, online sexual harassment

Introduction

Sexting, the phenomenon commonly defined as the sending, receiving, and possessing of sexually explicit images and/or text within digital forms of communication, is a practice that has been met with much social, political, and legal concern (Crofts, Lee, McGovern, & Milivojevic, 2015; Gillespie, 2013; Diliberto & Matthey, 2009). While the rationales justifying these various concerns differ based on who the stakeholders are and the types of vested interests they have, many of these actors posit similar arguments in stating that sexting has the potential to generate negative, irreversible consequences that induce significant amounts of harm to its participant members: These consequences include peer pressure, suicidal ideation, cyberbullying, cyber-harassment, sexual shaming and stigmatization, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, and the proliferation of online child sexual abuse (Chalfen, 2009; Van Ouytsel, Walrave, Ponnet, & Helman, 2015; Samimi & Alderson, 2014). Other notable arguments in opposition of sexting suggest that sexting eradicates youth innocence, encourages sexual perversion, promotes moral deterioration, and legitimizes sexual deviance (Peterson-Iyer, 2013).

Despite the general sense of caution and fear prescribed by various socio-legal stakeholders, sexting as a practice is largely considered innocuous by many scholars— that is, there is an understanding that consensual sexting is not the same as nonconsensual, coercive image sharing (Slane, 2013; Crofts, Lee, McGovern, & Milivojevic, 2015; Karaian, 2014; Hasinoff, 2012; Ringrose, Harvey, Gill, & Livingstone, 2013). A clear distinction is thus made between sexting enacted among mutually consenting individuals, and intimate image sharing that is conducted abusively with disregard for an individual's authorization and consent. Therefore, it can be argued that it is sexting's potential to result in instances of nonconsensual pornography¹ –

¹ Refer to the “*Definitional Framework: Nonconsensual Pornography*” section for an elaborated explanation of the term, the author's rationale for using this term, and its relation to “*revenge porn*”.

which is the nonconsensual distribution of privatize sexual content (Citron & Franks, 2014; Humbach, 2014; Turngate, 2014; Patton, 2015) – and not the act itself, that is responsible for igniting most of this public fear and anxiety. As a result of sexting’s potential to evolve into cases of exploitative nonconsensual intimate image sharing, this emerging phenomenon has generated considerable amounts of concern from not only parents and guardians, but also from politicians, health practitioners, educators, and legislators worldwide (Moore, 2012; Williams, 2012; D’Antona, Kevorkian, & Russom, 2010; Strassberg, McKinnon, Sustaita, & Rullo, 2012).

Contrary to the aforementioned concerns and speculations on sexting behaviors, studies conducted by Crofts, Lee, McGovern, and Milivojevic (2015) have revealed that most sexting encounters do not result in any form of online sexual harassment and/or nonconsensual pornography. In fact, the authors highlight that most sexting practices are enacted between romantic partners vested in consensual relationships. While this does not mean that sexting only happens between consenting individuals who are involved in romantic relationships, it does point to an embellishment of the moral panic and concern surrounding sexting as an inherently problematic behavior. Moreover, while it is undeniable that nonconsensual pornography may be made easier between sexting participants as opposed to those who abstain entirely from any form of intimate image sharing online, the two behaviors must be distinguished as separate practices that do not bear inherent causal relationships – that is, even if there are instances of consensual sexting encounters that evolve into forms of nonconsensual pornography, the two must not be assumed as synonymous encounters that are engendered organically from one another – sexting does not *cause* nonconsensual pornography.

Therefore, while most sexting participants rarely end up engaging in nonconsensual pornography, it is the potential for the former practice to progress into the latter that propels

individuals to inhabit disapproving attitudes towards the activity and its participants (Crofts, Lee, McGovern, & Milivojevic, 2015). This notion that *all* and *any* form of sexting leads to nonconsensual pornography is, consequently, based on an erroneous assumption that intimate images disseminated through cyberspace are universally exploitative (Slane, 2013; Choi, 2015).

Ultimately, despite being treated as what Cohen (1972) may refer to as a moral panic, very few studies to date have been conducted to uncover *what* the commonly held perceptions are as to why individuals choose to participate in nonconsensual pornography. In addition, there is a scarcity in research investigating *why* some consensually sexting participants transition into nonconsensual pornography behaviors. This is especially puzzling given the frequency of discussions connecting sexting's development into instances of online sexual exploitation.

Given this gap in the social science literature, this study will focus on establishing the groundwork of what the commonly held perceptions are as to why individuals choose to participate in nonconsensual pornography. While the current study has a relatively small sample size, it is the first to examine motivations of nonconsensual pornography using perception analyses. Using an online survey method designed to ask respondents about their perceptions of various situations involving sexting and nonconsensual pornography, the study provides insight into the perceptions of what people believe motivates nonconsensual pornography behaviors.

Perceptions of Criminal Motivation

Since questioning people about whether or not they have engaged in nonconsensual pornography require admissions of guilt, the aim of this study was to explore what people thought influences others individual's involvement in nonconsensual pornography. While perception studies are different from inquiries examining the confirmed rationales of an offender

(Samenow, 2012), commonly held perceptions of crime and criminal motivations are important in that they may dictate how legal policies are shaped and enacted within society.

The most notable perceptions studies within criminology and criminal justice are those that deal with sanction threat perceptions and criminal activity – namely, whether or not perceived sanctions of certainty and severity reflect people’s actions and how legal proceedings are carried out (e.g., Dodge, Bosick, & Antwerp, 2013; Schoepfer, Carmichael, & Piquero, 2007; Apel, 2013; Russo, Roccato, & Viento, 2013). For instance, in their study assessing the influences of risk perception on both white-collar and street level crime, Schoepfer and colleagues (2007) allude to the idea that behavior is tied to people’s perceptions and attitudes about punishment. Russo et al. (2013) adds to the aforementioned notion by claiming that perceived risks of crime may assist people in avoiding potential victimization and/or re-victimization. That is, if someone perceives assault crimes to occur more frequently at night, that individual may shift their behaviors so that they remain indoors during the evening or implement security measures to enhance safety during the nighttime (e.g., Russo, Roccato, & Vieno, 2013).

While numerous studies assessing sanction threat perceptions and criminal activity have been conducted within scholarship, studies focusing on perceptions of criminal motivation have been rather scarce. That is, although crime seriousness perception studies have been conducted (e.g., Stylianou, 2003), studies that inquire about people’s perceptions regarding other individual’s criminal motivations have not been extensive. These types of perception studies are significant in that they can be used to compare whether or not popular perceptions of criminal motivation are consistent with actual offender dispositions. Moreover, it is likely that popular perceptions of crime and criminal motivation influence political decisions regarding policy (e.g.,

Dodge, Bosick, & Antwerp, 2013; Schoepfer, Carmichael, & Piquero, 2007; Apel, 2013; Russo, Roccato, & Viento, 2013).

Currently, the few academic studies examining perceptions of criminal motivation have all been with regards to whether or not knowledge of an offender's criminal motivation influence attributions about the culpability of victims and perpetrators (e.g., Angelone, Mitchell, & Lucente, 2012; Mitchell, Angelone, Kohlberger, & Hirschman, 2009; Sizemore, 2013; Sahl & Keene, 2012). The primary objective of these studies is to determine how influential knowledge of an individual's criminal motivation is on how one perceives that person to be guilty and responsible for the crime. A 2009 study conducted by Mitchell et al. revealed that participants were more likely to describe a scenario as rape, recommend a longer prison sentence, and assign less blame to the victim, when they were told that the offender's criminal act was motivated by violence as opposed to motivated by sex. This is consistent with a later study conducted by Angelone and colleagues (2012) in that they found knowledge of an offender's motivation, as well as observers' gender role attitudes, to be influential in affecting attributions about the culpability of victims and perpetrators of date rape. It is worth noting that while motivation can have a role in sentencing outcomes, it plays no role in the legal findings of guilt – that is, an important factor in determining one's legal finding of guilt is whether or not one participated in a criminal act intentionally or unintentionally, not the motivation involved.

It must be noted, however, that these studies did not inquire about people's perceptions on offender motivations. Instead, they provided knowledge of an offender's motivation and tested to see whether such information influenced how one perceived the offender's criminal culpability. These are two distinct types of analyses, as the one asking about people's perceptions of offender motivations aim to uncover commonly held beliefs as to what motivates individuals

who choose to engage in criminal behavior, whereas studies providing participants with various offender motives aim to uncover whether or not particular motivations are regarded as more serious, and hence requiring harsher punishment.

The present study seeks to establish commonly held perceptions as to why individuals believe others participate in nonconsensual pornography. An interesting aspect to note will be whether or not people attribute the causes of nonconsensual pornography to internal factors (such as personality traits) or external factors (such as a relationship breakdown), given that they are assessing the criminal motivation of others and not their own. This is the first study of its kind to explicitly examine nonconsensual pornography motivations using perception analyses.

Literature Review

Sexting, a term notably mentioned as *Time Magazine's* number one buzzword in 2009 (Samimi & Alderson, 2014), continues to generate considerable amounts of both societal and scholarly interest as an emerging practice of adolescent and young adult culture. Though various studies have been conducted throughout the decade, the issue of sexting is still one that lacks a cohesive analytical foundation. As a result, the discussions on sexting have been both limited and scattered in terms of consistency and coherence – namely, the findings reflected in current studies have generated unresolved ambiguities regarding its motives, parameters, and theoretical frameworks (e.g., Samimi & Alderson, 2014; Gordon-Messer, Bauermeister, Grodzinski, & Zimmerman, 2013; Ahern & Mechling, 2013; Weisskirch & Delevi, 2011; Temple, Le, van den Berg, Ling, Paul, & Temple, 2014; Zirkel, 2009). Nevertheless, there are some foci in studies conducted on sexting, including investigations of its gendered nature, economic influences, relational affiliations, social ramifications, legal implications, political hostilities, and

psychological harms (e.g., Samimi & Alderson, 2014; Slane, 2013; Gordon-Messer et al., 2013; Ahern & Mechling, 2013; Weisskirch & Delevi, 2011; Temple et al., 2014; Zirkel, 2009).

Similar to the sexting literature, the scholarly trends in nonconsensual pornography have been rather limited in breadth – most taking the form of legal studies scholarship (e.g., Citron & Franks, 2014; Humbach, 2014; Turngate, 2014; Patton, 2015). This suggests that while legal analyses on appropriate legal responses to nonconsensual pornography are rich, social science research examining why one would engage in such behaviors are relatively scarce. However, unlike the failure to grasp a definitive working definition of sexting's parameters, nonconsensual pornography has been recognized rather universally as denoting similar conventions (e.g., Citron & Franks, 2014; Humbach, 2014; Turngate, 2014; Patton, 2015; Williams, 2012).

Before investigating the perceptions individuals have towards consensual sexting and its relations to nonconsensual pornography, one must grasp an understanding of both these definitional frameworks and comprehend how these terms are deployed in empirical studies. Given that a comprehensive definitional understanding is imperative for any academic inquiry, this is where the contextual background of this study will begin.

Definitional Framework: Sexting

Although phrased in slightly different ways across studies, sexting is generally interpreted as the sending, receiving, and forwarding of nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually explicit text messages, images, or videos via the cell phone and/or other such electronic devices (e.g., Weisskirch & Delevi, 2011; Gordon-Messer et al., 2012; Berger, 2009; Taylor, 2009; Sinrod, 2010; Zirkel, 2009; Judge, 2012; Temple et al., 2014). This broad definition is an amalgamation of the various working definitions found across the sexting scholarship. In fact, there is a great deal of inconsistency with regards to the various actions (sending, receiving,

forwarding), descriptions (nude, semi-nude, sexually explicit), mediums (text messages, images, videos), and devices (cell phones, Internet-based devices, computers, electronic devices) encapsulated within the ranging definitions of sexting (e.g., Korenis & Billick, 2014; Williams, 2012; Roche, Epstein-Ngo, Carter, Konrath, Walter, Zimmerman, & Cunningham, 2015; Walker, Sanci, & Temple-Smith, 2011; Simpson, 2015; Zemmels & Khey, 2014). In addition, there is no consensus on whether a “sext” is an image, a text, or a video; whether it is sent by the participating individuals themselves or through external third-party members; whether consent or abuse was involved; and whether or not there are differences between acceptable and unacceptable forms of sexting – the former serving as a means to enhance intimacy, whereas the latter involves the exploitation of others (e.g., Slane, 2013; Wolak & Finkelhor, 2011; Gillespie, 2013; Breese-Vitelli, 2011; Gamez-Gaudix, Almendros, Borrajo, & Calvete, 2015). These ambiguities all point to an inconsistent definitional understanding of sexting that may be interpreted differently by different people (e.g., Powell & Henry, 2014; Moore, 2012; Thomas & Cauffman, 2014).

Importantly, *sexting* is a term coined, encouraged, and operationalized by adults – mainly scholars, politicians, and legal commentators who do not frequently engage in the behavior themselves (Crofts, Lee, McGovern, & Milivojevic, 2015). Although a general understanding of the term may be similar across participating and non-participating members alike, the terminologies used to describe and label the practice vary among different demographic groups. For instance, while adults are more likely to use the term “sexting”, youths are more likely to employ the terms “nudies”, “nudes”, and “dick pic” in describing these same sexualized images (Crofts, Lee, McGovern, & Milivojevic, 2015). Ultimately, while a prescribed consensus definition of sexting has yet to emerge, the current study will operationalize a general

conceptualization of sexting that include the sending, receiving, and forwarding of nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually explicit/implicit text messages, images, or videos via the cell phone and/or other such electronic devices.

Definitional Framework: Nonconsensual Pornography

Unlike sexting's inconsistent interpretation, the term nonconsensual pornography is widely recognized as being the nonconsensual distribution of private sexual content (e.g., Waldman, 2017; Otero, 2016; Cecil, 2014). It is interesting to note that various studies across academia have labeled this behavior as "revenge porn" despite their differences in meaning (e.g., Citron & Franks, 2014; Humbach, 2014; Turngate, 2014; Patton, 2015; Gillespie, 2013). To clarify, the threshold for nonconsensual pornography is much lower than that of revenge porn, as all that is needed to meet its criteria is the absence of consent (Turngate, 2014; Patton, 2015). In other words, while revenge porn implies a particular motive, the term nonconsensual pornography captures the nature of the criminal act – namely, the nonconsensual dissemination of intimate images.

One notable way of examining the differences in meaning is to consider the syntax of the terms. By operationalizing the word 'revenge' directly within the terminology itself, the term revenge porn explicitly suggests a sort of vengeful, retributive rationale behind these acts of nonconsensual distribution. Such motives, however, would then imply the pre-existence of a romantic relationship prior to the acts taking place – or at the very least, the existence of some form of acquaintanceship among those involved that would engender retributive attitudes. In this regard, by having the word 'revenge' implanted within the working definition of the term, various unacquainted perpetrators whose aim is to exploit individuals for mere financial and/or personal gain would be categorically excluded due to their lack of vengefulness. Stated

differently, any motive that does not involve revenge would be ignored from revenge porn discussions due to the syntax of the term implying the presence of some kind of former relationship (romantic or not) between the individuals involved. In reverse, the term nonconsensual pornography emphasizes the nature of the act without considering the type of motives involved – that is, the term focuses on the nonconsensual dissemination of intimate images and not the motivations embedded within them.

As a result of the term's ability to encompass all types of nonconsensual intimate image sharing, the present study will operationalize the term nonconsensual pornography within its analysis. That is, given that the study focuses on people's perceptions of nonconsensual intimate image sharing, the term nonconsensual pornography was chosen in place of the term revenge porn. By removing the requirement of revenge from the study's working definition, the objective is to highlight the element of consent – or a lack thereof – as the major component to consider in discussions surrounding nonconsensual intimate image sharing. Whether or not prior relations between those involved were established, the two conditions that require considerable attention are consent and the infliction of harm upon the victimized individual(s).

Legal Parameters

Based on section 162.1 of the Criminal Code of Canada, all forms of nonconsensual distribution of intimate images are prohibited by law. This means that regardless of the age and motivation of the offender(s) or victims, disseminating intimate images of an individual without consent is subject to criminal prosecution. Using the Canadian context as an example, a brief summary of the current law on nonconsensual pornography will be provided. In order to enhance the understanding of this legal statute, the summary will be followed by an example of a recent case study demonstrating the application of the law.

Criminal Code s. 162.1

In an attempt to address the emerging issues of online criminality, the Conservative government of Canada proposed a statute entitled the *Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act* – also known as Bill C-13 (Montgomery, 2015). In 2015, a new offence for non-consensual distribution of intimate images was amended into the Criminal Code of Canada as section 162.1. In summary, section 162.1 is effective in combatting any type of publication of an intimate image without consent: “Everyone who knowingly publishes, distributes, transmits, sells, makes available or advertises an intimate image of a person knowing that the person depicted in the image did not give their consent to that conduct, or being reckless as to whether or not that person gave their consent to that conduct” (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46). Given that nonconsensual pornography almost always involves digital technology now, such forms of online intimate image sharing would fall under this legislation. The interesting aspect of Criminal Code s. 162.1 is its application to both youth and adult offenders – that is, both groups of people are subject to the provisions under the law if they engage in any form of nonconsensual distribution of private sexual material (e.g., Montgomery, 2015; Berger, 2009).

Criminal Code s. 162.1: Case Study

In March of 2016, Canada saw its first prosecution for the offence of nonconsensual pornography under section 162.1. The ruling in this case was that the unnamed assailant – a 29-year old male residing in Winnipeg, Manitoba – would serve a 90-day prison sentence after posting three nude images of his ex-girlfriend online after she confessed to cheating on him with his co-worker (Khandaker, 2016). In addition to his prison sentence, the offender was also banned from “using the Internet for three years except for work purposes as part of his supervised probation” (Khandaker, 2016). It must be noted that the three naked images of his ex-

girlfriend were initially taken, exchanged, and viewed through mutual consent when the two were still involved in a romantic relationship – that is, there was an understanding that these images were to be kept within the relationship (McIntyre, 2016). According to the defendant's legal representative, although his client was under the influence of both alcohol and crack cocaine at the time of his posting the images, his client had successfully deleted the images of his ex-girlfriend thirty minutes after uploading them on Facebook (Khandaker, 2016). Given the nature of the act, it is unclear how many people may have seen the pictures, or whether copies of the images were made (McIntyre, 2016).

This case is significant in that it shows the possible role revenge may have in nonconsensual pornography sentencing – the offender in this case was sentenced to 90-days in prison and banned from “using the Internet for three years except for work purposes as part of his supervised probation” (Khandaker, 2016). That is, while cases devoid of revenge are still punishable under the law, this case highlights the role that revenge may play in the sentencing of nonconsensual pornography offences.

Methodology

Data Collection and Procedure

The current study recruited a sample of 63 participants who completed an online questionnaire. The survey initially generated 67 respondents, but due to four (4) of the surveys being incomplete, they were omitted from the total. Table 1 below presents seven (7) specific demographic items (sex, student status, age, race, sexual orientation, current relationship status, and romantic relationship history) that were highlighted in the sample. The sample consisted of a majority Caucasian, female, student, heterosexual, currently and formerly experienced (dating), 18-25-year-old participant body. While Caucasian (race) and currently dating (current

relationship status) made up the majority in their categories, they were only slightly larger than East Asian (race) and single (current relationship status), respectively. Even though this sample cannot be considered representative of the general population on the basis of the population demographic, the composition of the sample is not a major concern in this study. This is because the study is more concerned with individuals' perceptions and attitudes towards rationales for nonconsensual pornography than with who participated in the study.

Table 1: Sample Demographics

Demographic characteristic	Study Sample (n=63)
Sex:	
Female	66.67% (n=42)
Male	33.33% (n=21)
Student Status:	
Student	61.90% (n=39)
Non-Student	38.10% (n=24)
Age:	
18-25	82.54% (n=52)
26-30	12.70% (n=8)
31-40	1.59% (n=1)
41+	3.17% (n=2)
Race:	
Caucasian	41.27% (n=26)
Black	7.94% (n=5)
East Asian	33.33% (n=21)
South Asian	1.59% (n=1)
West Indian/Caribbean	4.76% (n=3)
Bi-Racial/Other	11.11% (n=7)
Sexual Orientation:	
Heterosexual	85.72% (n=54)
Homosexual	4.76% (n=3)
Bisexual	4.76% (n=3)
Asexual	3.17% (n=2)
Pansexual	1.59% (n=1)
Current Relationship Status:	
Single	41.27% (n=26)
Dating	49.21% (n=31)
Engaged	3.17% (n=2)
Married	6.35% (n=4)
Romantic Relationship History:	
Yes	82.54 (n=52)
No	17.46% (n=11)

The questionnaire² distributed in the study had a combined total of 35 questions: 29 multiple-choice questions, and 6 open ended questions. The questionnaire was comprised of a mixture of demographic, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions asking participants to indicate both their willingness to engage in sexting and nonconsensual pornography, as well as their perceptions on why they believed others might partake in them.

Respondents were recruited through a purposive sampling method, whereby an online questionnaire was disseminated and posted in public forums and various social media websites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit). To further increase participant totals, the researcher asked twenty (20) individuals that were already known to him to disseminate the survey's hyperlink using their own social media pages and/or frequented online public forums. These select individuals were chosen based on three demographic criteria: (1) Race, (2) country of residency, and (3) age. The reasoning behind the criteria was to obtain a diverse data sample group that consisted of participants from different racial groups, nationalities, and age. Of the twenty (20) individuals asked, fifteen (15) respondents agreed to post and/or disseminate the online survey link. Only those individuals who voluntarily agreed to distribute the online survey were given the link, as it may have been the case that respondents either did not wish to share additional contacts or were unaware of any. While the actual number of referrals were not confirmed – as there may have been individuals who, despite volunteering to distribute the survey online, did not do so – the issue was not be pursued further. That is, these individuals were not contacted further regarding their involvement in the dissemination and/or recruitment process. Furthermore, respondents were made aware at the beginning of this request that their

² Refer Appendix 1 for the questionnaire used

involvement had to be completely voluntary, and that they were under no obligation to participate in the study or to refer the researcher to additional respondents.

In the case that the researcher needed to reference a particular participant's response in any research publication or secondary data, respondents were made aware at the beginning of the survey that a pseudonym would be used to indicate a participant's identity (i.e. Participants would be randomly labeled as P1, P2, etc. when referencing that individual's response to a question within the questionnaire). If the participant opted to leave the study during the questionnaire for whatever reason, they were given the ability to do so. Respondents, however, were informed that the data collected up until the point where the participant left the study was still to be used in any capacity deemed fit by the researcher.

Properties and Measures: Multiple-Choice Questions

The current study consisted of three sets of multiple choice questions that examined respondents' willingness to engage in hypothetical instances of sexting and nonconsensual pornography, as well as obtain their perceptions on why they believed others might partake in the aforementioned behaviors. Respondents were first asked whether or not they would engage in intimate and non-intimate image sharing with their peers and romantic partners in cases involving and lacking consent. A second set of questions asked participants whether or not they would share intimate and non-intimate images of their peers or romantic partners with the other party (i.e., intimate/non-intimate images of peers to romantic partners, and intimate/non-intimate images of romantic partners to peer). The last set of multiple choice questions asked respondents about whether or not the medium used to share digital images had any effect on their willingness to share both intimate and non-intimate images with their peers and romantic partners (i.e., social media, flashing on one's own device, and sending the file).

In order to clarify some of the key terms and concepts used within the questionnaire, definitions of the following terms were given: “Sharing”, “non-consensually”, “intimate digital images”, “non-intimate digital images”, and “share on own device” (*see table 2 below*). While other definitions could have been provided in the questionnaire, only the aforementioned five were given clarifications because of their possible ambiguity. The other terms were not given definitions for two reasons: (1) The terms did not bear many differences in interpretation, and (2) so as to not confuse and/or lead participants to a certain response or thought.

Table 2: Definition of terms provided in questionnaire

Term	Definition
“Sharing”	“Uploading, disseminating, showing/flashings, or sending of digital pictures from one party to another”
“Non-consensually”	“Not having the permission of the individual(s) in question. In other words, in a party of more than one individual, if even one person does not grant permission to conduct a given act and/or behavior, that agreement would be bound as being committed non-consensually”
“Non-intimate digital images”	“Any image captured and produced electronically (cameras, computers, phones, etc.) that does not have nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While deeming something as sexual is subjective, the term “non-intimate” here refers to the general, sexual nature of the content being displayed (i.e. a graduation photo of an individual with a convocation gown would be classified as non-intimate because it does not bear a sexual connotation, nor shows an individual being nude or semi-nude)”
“Intimate digital images”	“Any image depicting nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While the image does not have to be sexual, the image does have to be sexually provocative (i.e. while a female holding an ice cream cone may not be sexual, if she is captured as licking the ice cream, it could be classified as being sexually provocative)”
“Share on own device”	“Letting them view the images as it appears on your own device”

Properties and Measures: Image Sharing, Consent, and Recipient

As mentioned, the first set of multiple choice questions focused on whether or not participants would engage in intimate and non-intimate image sharing with their peers and romantic partners in cases involving and/or lacking consent. The purpose of these questions were to identify whether or not participants would engage in intimate and non-intimate image sharing based on the presence and/or absence of consent and the recipient involved. The survey intentionally distinguished peers and romantic partners as separate recipient categories to see if the receiver had any impact on people's willingness to share intimate and non-intimate digital images. These questions did not require any admission of conduct or experience, as they were all presented as hypothetical scenarios of image sharing.

This set consisted of eight different questions asking participants whether or not they would: (1) "Be open to consensually sharing non-intimate digital images with peers"; (2) "be open to consensually sharing intimate digital images with romantic partner"; (3) "ever non-consensually send non-intimate digital images of either yourself or someone else to peers"; (4) "ever non-consensually send non-intimate digital images of either yourself or someone else to romantic partner"; (5) "be open to consensually sharing intimate digital images with peers"; (6) "be open to consensually sharing intimate digital images with romantic partner"; (7) "ever non-consensually send intimate digital images to peers"; and (8) "ever non-consensually send intimate digital images to romantic partner". The possible range of responses were "yes", "no", and "indifferent". The results of this set are shown in table 3.

Properties of Measures: Image Sharing, Content, and Recipient

The second set of multiple choice questions focused on whether or not participants would share intimate and non-intimate images of their peers or romantic partners with a non-

involved third party (i.e., intimate/non-intimate images of peers to romantic partners, and intimate/non-intimate images of romantic partners to peer). The purpose of these questions were to identify whether or not participants were more willing to share intimate and non-intimate images of their peers or romantic partners based on the content of the image (i.e., who is depicted in the images) and the recipient (i.e., peers or romantic partners). Similar to the first set of questions, the survey intentionally distinguished peers and romantic partners as separate recipient categories to see if the receiver had any impact on people's willingness to share intimate and non-intimate digital images. Moreover, the content of the images were also separated into two categories (peers and romantic partners) to see if the person depicted in the image had any impact on people's willingness to share. Consistent with the former set of questions, these also did not require any admission of conduct, as they were all presented as one's willingness to participate in hypothetical scenarios.

This set consisted of four questions asking whether or not participants would: (1) "Share non-intimate digital images of peers with romantic partner"; (2) "share non-intimate digital images of romantic partner with peers"; (3) "share intimate digital images of peers with romantic partner"; and (4) "share intimate digital images of romantic partner with peers". Responses to this set ranged from "yes" and "no". The results of this set are shown in table 4.

Properties of Measures: Image Sharing, Content, and Medium

The last set of multiple choice questions focused on whether or not the medium used to share digital images had any effect on participants' willingness to share both intimate and non-intimate images with their peers and romantic partners. Three types of mediums were presented: (1) Posting on social media, (2) flashing images through one's own device, and (3) sending the image file directly. The purpose of these questions were to identify whether or not participants

were more likely to share images based on the content of the image and the medium employed.

Like the first two sets of questions, this last set also distinguished peers and romantic partners into separate categories to see if the image content had any impact on people's willingness to use different mediums in sharing intimate and non-intimate digital images. Once again, these questions did not require any admission of conduct.

This set consisted of ten different questions asking whether or not participants would:

(1) "Post non-intimate digital images of peers on social media"; (2) "post non-intimate digital images of romantic partner on social media"; (3) "post intimate digital images of peers on social media"; (4) "post intimate digital images of romantic partner on social media"; (5) "share non-intimate digital images of peers with others on your own device"; (6) "share non-intimate digital images of romantic partner with others on your own device"; (7) "share intimate digital images of peers with others on your own device"; (8) "share intimate digital images of romantic partner with others on your own device"; (9) "share intimate digital images of peers with others by digitally sending them the image file"; and (10) "share intimate digital images of romantic partner with others by digital sending them the image file". The possible range of responses were "yes" and "no". The results of this set are shown in table 5.

Properties of Measures: Open-ended Qualitative Questions

In order to obtain more expressive written responses to the current inquiry, the questionnaire had a set of six (6) open-ended qualitative questions asking respondents about their thoughts and attitudes towards nonconsensual pornography committed against peers and romantic partners. This set consisted of six different questions asking participants to explain why they perceived others would: (1) "Share private images of peers without consent"; (2) "share private images of romantic partners without consent"; (3) "what might motivate someone who

initially had consent, to then send intimate pictures of their peers without consent”; (4) “what might motivate someone who initially had consent, to then send intimate pictures of their romantic partner without consent”; (5) “is it troubling to share intimate digital images of peers without their consent”; and (6) “is it troubling to share intimate digital images of a romantic partner without their consent”. The objective of this particular set of open-ended questionings was to determine if there were any common themes among respondents’ thoughts on the factors influencing nonconsensual pornography – namely, the factors that motivate people to commit nonconsensual pornography, and why engaging in such acts would pose problems, if at all.

Analytical Framework

A qualitative research design was used in the present study for its ability to supply a greater understanding to the understudied area of attitudes toward nonconsensual pornography. Given the lack of data and knowledge within this area of study, a qualitative analysis was ideal in capturing the various themes and nuances embedded within individuals’ perceptions of nonconsensual pornography motivations. The qualitative data for this study was obtained using an online medium. Using an online platform (digital surveys, public web forums, webpages, online newspapers, etc.) to collect qualitative data is not uncommon, as many cybercrime (as well as non-cybercrime) inquiries have adopted this technique to examine their research topics (e.g., Holt, 2012; Holt & Lampke, 2010; Martin & Rice, 2011; Lu, Liang, & Taylor, 2010; Neville, Adams, & Cook, 2016; Adams, Dickinson, & Asiasiga, 2013). The main benefit of using an online medium to collect qualitative data is its ability to provide vulnerable sample populations with a sense of empowerment by giving them a platform to voice their thoughts and opinions in a completely anonymous environment (Neville, Adams, & Cook, 2016). While the current study did not require participants to indicate any experience with sexting and/or

nonconsensual pornography, there may have been respondents within the collected sample who had previously encountered and/or currently engage in nonconsensual pornography. Using an online survey method provides these respondents, as well as other non-vulnerable populations, the ability to express their thoughts on sensitive issues in complete anonymity without outside pressures.

In terms of how the coding process of the analysis was carried out, the open-ended qualitative responses were coded into thematic frames using an open coding approach. That is, all open-ended responses were labeled and categorized into themes based on their content similarity. The label names were generated by the author in some cases (based on their holistic thematic meaning), whereas in others, the thematic frames were taken from the content itself using what Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to as “in vivo codes” (i.e., when the respondents’ phrasing and/or words are taken directly to form the label of the code). While most individual responses were coded under a single theme, there were also instances where individual responses were coded into multiple themes because of their applicability. That is, some participant responses had many different thoughts within their replies to a single question. In cases like these, the individual response was categorized into the appropriate thematic frames based on fit. It is important to note that none of the responses that were coded into multiple themes were conceptually contradictory.

Results

Image Sharing Based on Consent and Recipient

The first set of multiple choice responses indicate that approximately 11% of participants would be open to consensually sharing intimate images with their peers. This implies that the majority of respondents would not be willing to consensually share intimate digital images with

their peers. In contrast, approximately 56% of respondents stated that they would consensually share intimate digital images with their romantic partners. Based on these particular findings, the data suggests that participants are more comfortable with consensually sharing intimate digital images with their romantic partners than with their peers.

With regards to nonconsensual image sharing among peers and romantic partners, only about 3% of respondents indicated that they would share intimate images with their peers without consent. The overwhelming majority of participants claimed that they would not share intimate images with their peers without consent. In terms of intimate image sharing with romantic partners, only about 22% of participants stated that they would share intimate digital images with their romantic partners without consent. While this figure is higher in count than the one involving peers, the majority of respondents indicated similar sentiments in that they would not be open to sharing intimate images with their romantic partners without consent. These findings suggest that while the majority of respondents would not be open to consensually and/or nonconsensually sharing intimate images with peers, a greater number of respondents would be open to sharing intimate images with their romantic partners if consent is present, in comparison to when consent is absent. In other words, while approximately 8% more of respondents stated that they would share intimate images with their peers if consent were present, 33% more of respondents stated that they would share intimate images with their romantic partner if consent were present. This implies that, while the number of participants willing to share intimate images with peers is low with or without consent, intimate image sharing with romantic partners vary based on the presence and/or absence of consent.

In terms of participants' willingness to consensually share non-intimate digital images with peers, an 83% majority stated that they would be open to consensually sharing non-intimate

digital images with peers. Similarly, 92% of respondents claimed that they would be willing to consensually share non-intimate digital images with their romantic partners. With regards to sharing non-intimate digital images without consent, approximately 59% of respondents indicated that they would be open to sharing these images with peers and 68% with romantic partners. Based on these findings (see table 3), it is clear that the intimacy of the images (intimate versus non-intimate) and the presence/absence of consent are significant factors in determining one's willingness to share images with peers and romantic partners – with participants being more willing to share non-intimate images over intimate images, and more willing to participate if consent is involved rather than when it is not.

Tables 3: Image sharing based on consent and recipient

Type of Image Sharing/Consent Involved	Recipient of Images	
	Peers	Romantic Partner
Intimate Images of Oneself/Someone else with Consent	Yes: 11.11% (n=7) No: 77.78% (n=49) Indifferent: 11.11% (n=7)	Yes: 55.56% (n=35) No: 34.92% (n=22) Indifferent: 9.52% (n=6)
Intimate Images of Oneself/Someone else without Consent	Yes: 3.17 (n=2) No: 96.83% (n=61)	Yes: 22.22% (n=14) No: 77.78% (n=49)
Non-Intimate Images of Oneself/Someone else with Consent	Yes: 82.54% (n=52) No: 11.11% (n=7) Indifferent: 6.35% (n=4)	Yes: 92.07% (n=58) No: 3.17% (n=2) Indifferent: 4.76% (n=3)
Non-Intimate Images of Oneself/Someone else without Consent	Yes: 58.73% (n=37) No: 41.27% (n=26)	Yes: 68.25% (n=43) No: 31.75% (n=20)

Image Sharing Based on Content and Recipient

Based on the findings in table 4, approximately 16% of participants indicated that they would share intimate images of their peers with their romantic partners. In contrast, only 6% of respondents stated that they would share intimate images of their romantic partners with their peers. An equal amount of approximately 81% of respondents claimed that they would share

non-intimate images of their peers with their romantic partners, and their romantic partners with their peers. These findings generally suggest that the majority of participants would not share intimate images of another party (be it peers or romantic partners) with others. That is, there is a reluctance to share intimate images of others with non-involved parties. Furthermore, these findings suggest that respondents are more willing to share digital images of peers and/or romantic partners to other non-involved parties if the images in question are non-intimate. When intimate images are involved, respondents are more willing to share pictures of their peers with their romantic partners than intimate images of their romantic partners with their peers.

Table 4: Image sharing based on content and recipient

Type of Images and Recipient	Study Sample (n=63)
Intimate Images of Peers to Romantic Partner	Yes: 15.87% (n=10) No: 84.13% (n=53)
Intimate Images of Romantic Partner to Peers	Yes: 6.35% (n=4) No: 93.65% (n=59)
Non-Intimate Images of Peers to Romantic Partner	Yes: 80.95% (n=51) No: 19.05% (n=12)
Non-Intimate Images of Romantic Partner to Peers	Yes: 80.95% (n=51) No: 19.05% (n=12)

Image Sharing Based on Content and Medium

According to table 5, respondents indicated a slight preference for “using one’s own device” over the “uploading it onto social media” medium in sharing non-intimate digital images of both peers and romantic partners. In terms of sharing intimate images of peers and romantic partners, respondents once again favored the “using one’s own device” method over both the “social media” and “sending the file” methods. While they are very similar in count, respondents showed a slight preference for sharing intimate images of peers on one’s own device in comparison to romantic partners. These findings all suggest that using one’s own device to show

both intimate and non-intimate images of peers and romantic partners is the preferred method.

Furthermore, it is underscored that respondents favor sharing non-intimate images of peers and romantic partners in comparison to intimate images, regardless of the medium employed.

Table 5: Image sharing based on medium involved

Type of Medium Involved	Non-Intimate Images of Peers	Intimate Images of Peers	Non-Intimate Images of Romantic Partner	Intimate Images of Romantic Partner
Social Media	Yes: 82.54% (n=52) No: 17.46% (n=11)	Yes: 6.35% (n=4) No: 93.65% (n=59)	Yes: 84.13% (n=53) No: 15.87% (n=10)	Yes: 6.35% (n=4) No: 93.65% (n=59)
Own Device Flashing	Yes: 85.71% (n=54) No: 14.29% (n=9)	Yes: 12.70% (n=8) No: 87.30% (n=55)	Yes: 92.06% (n=58) No: 7.94% (n=5)	Yes: 7.94% (n=5) No: 92.06% (n=58)
Sending File	————	Yes: 4.76% (n=3) No: 95.24% (n=60)	————	Yes: 6.35% (n=4) No: 93.65% (n=59)

Open-Ended Qualitative Responses

When respondents were asked why they thought people would share private digital images of their peers and romantic partners without consent, the most common thematic response was *bullying* for peers and *to brag, flaunt, or show off for approval* for romantic partners. This suggests that the perception is that people engage in nonconsensual pornography towards their peers to bring them down, whereas in romantic partners, it is to bring themselves up to a higher status. This contrast is highlighted when P1 stated that “[while] people would normally share private images of their peers in order to humiliate them”, people would share private images of their romantic partners without consent “probably to indicate how hot or sexy his/her romantic partner is”. This perception that violating a romantic partner’s privacy increases the perpetrator’s pride and reputation was demonstrated when P2 stated that people share intimate digital images of their romantic partners without consent out of “narcissism; ego. For example, “Look at how hot this girl I banged was””. An interesting element to point out is the identification of the victim’s sex in P2’s response. While the other responses categorized in this

particular thematic frame were worded in gender-neutral ways, P2 used an example that specified that the victim is a woman. This may suggest a perception that others also have with regards to who the typical victims are in cases of nonconsensual pornography. Other notable thematic responses to the question of why people would share private images of their peers and romantic partners without consent were: Because people do not find nonconsensual intimate image sharing of peers to be problematic, for humor purposes (peers), and to seek revenge (romantic partners).

When the questionnaire asked, what might motivate someone who initially had consent to then send intimate images of their peers and romantic partners without consent, the two most common thematic responses were *for revenge* and *assume consent is constant and/or carried over*. This is particularly interesting due to the differences in response when initial consent was absent. That is, when consent was non-existent to begin with, nonconsensual pornography was perceived to be committed against peers for injurious purposes and romantic partners for self-glorification reasons. However, in cases where initial consent was provided, the rationales of both shifted towards sentiments of vitriol (i.e., revenge) and negligence (i.e., assumed consent). Of the two, the theme associated with negligence (*assume consent is constant and/or carried over*) is the one unique to this change in circumstance. P3 described this theme of negligence as “they feel the need to have consent before sharing intimate photos, but do not realize that it is necessary to gain consent after the first occurrence”. P4 further claimed that:

“For a lot of people the initial consent is all they need. After that they can turn around and say that they had said yes initially and ignore their change of heart. Once they’ve said yes once and no that followed tends to be ignored. A pig-headed ignoring an individual’s wishes”

While revenge and other injurious motives are still taken into account when initial consent is abused, respondents were more inclined to perceive that people were either negligent or ignorant to the need for obtaining continued consent in situations where initial consent was provided. In other words, in cases where consent was initially given to the perpetrator, respondents felt that individuals might have disseminated the images to other parties due to a lack of understanding towards the meaning of consent. It is interesting to note the shift from intentional actions of harm to possibly suggesting a genuine lack of understanding in situations where consent was once provided. This implies that nonconsensual pornography committed without initial consent is perceived more harshly than nonconsensual pornography committed with initial consent.

When respondents were asked if they perceived sharing intimate digital images of peers and romantic partners without consent to be troubling, the majority of responses answered yes – that any kind of intimate image sharing without consent is troubling. The most common thematic response among intimate images of peers was because it is *abusive and/or can lead to abuse*, whereas the most common theme for intimate images of romantic partners was because it is an *invasion of trust*. It is interesting to note that, while an invasion of trust can also be categorized as abuse, respondents felt the need to mention the word “trust” in relation to romantic partners. This appears to be similar to the finding that respondents may be more protective and careful with sharing intimate images of their romantic partner with peers than vice-versa. That is, there may be something about trust or relationships that make intimate images of romantic partners merit more attention and value than intimate images of peers.

Despite the majority of participants expressing their concern with sharing intimate digital images without consent, there were four responses (two for peers and two for romantic partners)

that indicated opposite sentiments with regards to these behaviors. With regards to nonconsensually sharing intimate images of peers, P6 stated that:

“Personally, I have no trouble posting images of my peers considering the immediate people around me don’t take intimate pictures, and even if I did, there’s a possibility no one would know I did it. However, I don’t only out of consideration. Today, it’s easier to upload images without someone’s consent without leaving any digital footprint behind (unless you get an expert to trace it), and I find it to be very rude and the poster to be immature and in dire need of proper schooling”

While P6 attributed the perpetrator with being “rude”, “immature”, “and in dire need of proper schooling”, an explicit claim was made that “I have no trouble posting images of my peers”. The motivation for this behavior is credited to the likelihood of not getting caught. This suggests that, regardless of whether or not one shares intimate images with peers, the likelihood of not being caught and reprimanded may be an incentive to engage in the behavior. This same logic is echoed in relation to intimate images of romantic partners when P6 wrote:

“In regards to a digital image of a romantic partner on one’s own personal device (phone), then it’s not too troubling because the only people who look at/through the phone will only be you and a select few people (unless you’re the type of person who lets anyone go through their phone). Unlike posting onto social media, you can control who and how many people see the image of your romantic partner”

Unlike like the response given towards sharing intimate images of peers without consent, P6 specifies the medium of choice that would enhance the most security in conducting such behaviors – namely, the “use one’s own device” method. This is consistent with the other findings in that respondents would much rather flash the intimate images using one’s own device

rather than upload them onto social media or directly send others the image files. The main factor that makes this behavior non-troublesome for P6 is the amount of exposure and harm the select medium will induce for the victim. That is, while P6 implies that nonconsensually posting intimate images onto social media may be problematic, flashing people with their own devices is less troublesome because of its limited capacity to spread, generate harm, and be caught.

Discussion

The current study sought to explore individuals' willingness to engage in sexting and nonconsensual pornography, as well as their perceptions on why they believed others might partake in such activities. The study's aim was to establish commonly held perceptions as to why individuals choose to participate in nonconsensual pornography by examining how individuals perceive motivations for intimate image sharing with and without consent. This study incorporated elements of consent, type of image involved, levels of intimacy displayed, identity of the recipient, and the mediums used within its analysis.

According to the findings of this study, three major conclusions are drawn regarding participants' openness to engage in sexting and nonconsensual pornography: (1) The majority of respondents favor sharing images with romantic partners over peers; (2) sharing non-intimate images over intimate images; and (3) sharing images with consent rather than without it. The findings can be summarized as articulating current norms regarding image sharing. Moreover, these conclusions are consistent regardless of the medium and recipient involved. That is, in all instances of image sharing, respondents indicated a preference for sharing with romantic partners over peers, non-intimate digital images over intimate, and consensually over nonconsensually.

When intimate images were involved, respondents were more willing to share images of their peers with their romantic partners than private images of their romantic partners with their

peers. This suggests that respondents may be more protective and careful with sharing intimate images of their romantic partner with peers than vice-versa. While the current study did not probe this matter in greater capacity, there may be something about trust or relationships that make intimate images of romantic partners demand slightly more attention and care than intimate images of peers.

In terms of the preferred medium of use, participants were more willing to use their own devices to show both intimate and non-intimate images of either party rather than posting on social media or directly sending people the image files. This suggests that respondents may be aware of the permanency of posting and/or sending a digital image online, versus simply flashing it for viewers on one's own device. Despite all three behaviors constituting acts of online sexual harassment and abuse, respondents chose the medium that gives them the most control over the image, and the one most likely to warrant the least amount of social and legal ramification.

Limitations

One of the major limitations of the current study is its use of an online questionnaire. While employing an online survey made recruiting participants easier in terms of speed and accessibility, there was no way to ensure that respondents would answer all the questions provided in the survey – many of the open-ended questions were answered using single terms and/or short phrases. In addition, given that the study asks personal questions through a self-reporting medium, the possibility of participants hiding their true thoughts and attitudes due to the sensitivity of the questions must be considered. Even if the questions being asked were posed in hypothetical terms, since the survey was conducted through a self-reporting process, the possibility of retaining inaccurate and/or misleading data must be taken into consideration.

Another notable limitation of the study is its inability to recruit specific demographic populations – namely, nonconsensual pornography offenders and victims. While establishing commonly held perceptions of what people believe motivates nonconsensual pornography is important, these findings do not have the ability to claim what actually motivates offenders of nonconsensual pornography since perceptions of why people believe others commit an offense are altogether different from claims made from motivated offenders themselves.

Another limitation of the study is its failure to clarify two central items within the online survey: (1) who the term “peers” refer to, and (2) who the pictured people are in these types of image exchanges. For one, the term “peers” was used in the online survey without clarifying who the term was specifically referring to. While the term was intended to mean an individual’s friend(s), the broadness of the term could have been interpreted as someone the respondent is casually involved with, but does not qualify as a “romantic partner”. In other words, given the term’s broad definition, the concept of “peers” could have been interpreted to mean anything from a classmate or a co-worker, to someone the respondent is casually involved with, but does not label as a “romantic partner”. This is a significant limitation of the study as the presence of multiple definitions within the term could have confused the participants and/or yielded different responses. With regards to the second unclarified item within the survey, the questions on image sharing based on consent and recipient did not specify whether or not the intimate and non-intimate images were of themselves or of others. That is, the survey failed to specify whether or not these hypothetical scenarios of intimate and non-intimate image sharing involved pictures of the respondents themselves or of others. This is another notable limitation of the study as respondents’ willingness to participate in intimate and/or non-intimate image sharing with peers

and romantic partners could have differed based on who the pictured people were in these types of consensual and non-consensual image exchanges.

Conclusion

The current study demonstrates a strong normative disapproval of people who engage in nonconsensual pornography. Although the phenomenon of nonconsensual pornography is relatively new to scientific research, enough information is available to make a strong case that it is a serious problem and one that requires more research. It is important not only to study the risks and effects of sexting, but also to focus on cases where consensual sexting transitions into nonconsensual pornography. The current study provides an explanation for why individuals might partake in nonconsensual pornography offences (towards both peers and romantic partners) based on individuals' perceptions. The elements of consent, content of the image, level of intimacy displayed, recipient of the image, and the mediums employed were all factored into the analysis.

The current study offers new insight into the perceptions of what people believe motivates individuals to engage in nonconsensual pornography. This is the first study of its kind to explicitly examine nonconsensual pornography motivations using perception analyses. The findings of this research can be used to substantiate whether or not these popular perceptions are accurate in relation to actual offender motivations. Future studies would, therefore, benefit from using these perceptions to test whether or not actual offender motivations align with commonly held perceptions of nonconsensual pornography.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Thesis Questionnaire

1. Sex:
 - (a) Male
 - (b) Female
 - (c) Other: Please Specify
2. Age:
 - (a) 18-25
 - (b) 26-30
 - (c) 31-40
 - (d) 41+
3. Student Status:
 - (a) Student
 - (b) Non-Student
4. Race:
 - (a) Caucasian
 - (b) Black
 - (c) East Asian
 - (d) South Asian
 - (e) Middle-Eastern
 - (f) West Indian/Caribbean
 - (g) Bi-Racial: Please Specify
 - (h) Other: Please Specify
5. Current Relationship Status:
 - (a) Single
 - (b) Dating
 - (c) Engaged
 - (d) Married
 - (e) Common Law
 - (f) Widowed
 - (g) Other: Please Specify
6. Sexual Orientation:
 - (a) Heterosexual
 - (b) Homosexual
 - (c) Bisexual
 - (d) Asexual
 - (e) Pansexual
 - (f) Other: Please Specify

7. Have you ever been in a romantic relationship?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

8. Would you be open to consensually sharing non-intimate digital images with your peers?

→ “Sharing” means: Uploading, disseminating, showing/flashing, or sending a specified item or material from one platform/party to another. In this particular context, “sharing” refers to the uploading, disseminating, showing/flashing, or sending of digital pictures from one party to another.

→ “Non-intimate digital images” means: Any image captured and produced electronically (cameras, computers, phones, etc.) that does not have nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While deeming something as sexual is subjective, the term “non-intimate” here refers to the general, sexual nature of the content being displayed (i.e. a graduation photo of an individual with a convocation gown would be classified as non-intimate because it does not bear a sexual connotation, nor shows an individual being nude or semi-nude).

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Indifferent

9. Would you be open to consensually sharing non-intimate digital images with your romantic partner?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Indifferent

10. Would you ever non-consensually send non-intimate digital images of either yourself or someone else to your peers?

→ “Non-consensually” means: Not having the permission of the individual(s) in question. In other words, in a party of more than one individual, if even one person does not grant permission to conduct a given act and/or behaviour, that agreement would be bound as being committed “non-consensually”

→ “Non-intimate digital images” means: Any image captured and produced electronically (cameras, computers, phones, etc.) that does not have nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While deeming something as sexual is subjective, the term “non-intimate” here refers to the general, sexual nature of the content being displayed (i.e. a graduation photo of an individual with a convocation gown would be classified as non-intimate because it does not bear a sexual connotation, nor shows an individual being nude or semi-nude).

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

11. Would you ever non-consensually send non-intimate digital images of either yourself or someone else to your romantic partner?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

12. Would you be open to consensually sharing intimate digital images with your peers?

→ “Sharing” means: Uploading, disseminating, showing/flashing, or sending a specified item or material

from one platform/party to another. In this particular context, “sharing” refers to the uploading, disseminating, showing/flashing, or sending of digital pictures from one party to another

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Indifferent

13. Would you be open to consensually sharing intimate digital images with your romantic partner?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Indifferent

14. Would you ever non-consensually send intimate digital images to your peers?

→ “Non-consensually” means: Not having the permission of the individual(s) in question. In other words, in a party of more than one individual, if even one person does not grant permission to conduct a given act and/or behaviour, that agreement would be bound as being committed “non-consensually”.

→ “Intimate” means: Any image depicting nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While the image does not have to be sexual, the image does have to be sexually provocative (i.e. while a female holding an ice cream cone may not be sexual, if she is captured as licking the ice cream, it could be classified as being sexually provocative).

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

15. Would you be ever non-consensually send intimate digital images to your romantic partner?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

16. Would you share non-intimate digital images of your peers with your romantic partner?

→ “Sharing” means: Uploading, disseminating, showing/flashing, or sending a specified item or material from one platform/party to another. In this particular context, “sharing” refers to the uploading, disseminating, showing/flashing, or sending of digital pictures from one party to another.

→ “Non-intimate digital images” means: Any image captured and produced electronically (cameras, computers, phones, etc.) that does not have nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While deeming something as sexual is subjective, the term “non-intimate” here refers to the general, sexual nature of the content being displayed (i.e. a graduation photo of an individual with a convocation gown would be classified as non-intimate because it does not bear a sexual connotation, nor shows an individual being nude or semi-nude).

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

17. Would you share non-intimate digital images of your romantic partner with your peers?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

18. Would you share intimate digital images of your peers with your romantic partner?

→ “Sharing” means: Uploading, disseminating, showing/flashing, or sending a specified item or material from one platform/party to another. In this particular context, “sharing” refers to the uploading, disseminating, showing/flashing, or sending of digital pictures from one party to another.

→ “Intimate” means: Any image depicting nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While the image does not have to be sexual, the image does have to be sexually provocative (i.e. while a female holding an ice cream cone may not be sexual, if she is captured as licking the ice cream, it could be classified as being sexually provocative).

(a) Yes

(b) No

19. Would you share intimate digital images of your romantic partner with your peers?

(a) Yes

(b) No

20. Would you post non-intimate digital images of your peers on social media?

→ “Non-intimate digital images” means: Any image captured and produced electronically (cameras, computers, phones, etc.) that does not have nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While deeming something as sexual is subjective, the term “non-intimate” here refers to the general, sexual nature of the content being displayed (i.e. a graduation photo of an individual with a convocation gown would be classified as non-intimate because it does not bear a sexual connotation, nor shows an individual being nude or semi-nude).

(a) Yes

(b) No

21. Would you post non-intimate digital images of your romantic partner on social media?

(a) Yes

(b) No

22. Would you post intimate digital images of your peers on social media?

→ “Intimate” means: Any image depicting nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While the image does not have to be sexual, the image does have to be sexually provocative (i.e. while a female holding an ice cream cone may not be sexual, if she is captured as licking the ice cream, it could be classified as being sexually provocative).

(a) Yes

(b) No

23. Would you post intimate digital images of your romantic partner on social media?

(a) Yes

(b) No

24. Would you share non-intimate digital images of your peers with others on your own device (i.e., letting them view the images as it appears on your device)?

→“Non-intimate digital images” means: Any image captured and produced electronically (cameras, computers, phones, etc.) that does not have nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While deeming something as sexual is subjective, the term “non-intimate” here refers to the general, sexual nature of the content being displayed (i.e. a graduation photo of an individual with a convocation gown would be classified as non-intimate because it does not bear a sexual connotation, nor shows an individual being nude or semi-nude).

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

25. Would you share non-intimate digital images of your romantic partner with others on your own device (i.e., letting them view the images as it appears on your device)?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

26. Would you share intimate digital images of your peers with others on your own device (i.e., letting them view the images as it appears on your device)?

→“Intimate” means: Any image depicting nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While the image does not have to be sexual, the image does have to be sexually provocative (i.e. while a female holding an ice cream cone may not be sexual, if she is captured as licking the ice cream, it could be classified as being sexually provocative).

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

27. Would you share intimate digital images of your romantic partner with others on your own device (i.e., letting them view the images as it appears on your device)?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

28. Would you share intimate digital images of your peers with others by digitally sending them the image file?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

29. Would you share intimate digital images of your romantic partner with others by digitally sending them the image file?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

30. Why do you think people would share private images of their peers digitally with others without consent?

31. Why do you think people would share private images of their romantic partner digitally with others without consent?

32. What might motivate someone who initially had consent, to then digitally send intimate pictures of their peers without consent?
33. What might motivate someone who initially had consent, to then digitally send intimate pictures of their romantic partner without consent?
34. Is it troubling to share intimate digital images of peers without their consent? If so, why or why not?
35. Is it troubling to share intimate digital images of a romantic partner without their consent? If so, why or why not?

Appendix 2: Invitation Letter

REB # 15-133

University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Department of Criminology, Justice and Policy Studies
2000 Simcoe St. North,
Oshawa Ontario Canada L1R 3H4

Dear Participant,

My name is Jin R. Lee and I am a Criminology graduate student at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. I am researching perceptions on the nonconsensual dissemination of privatized digital images. This study is an objective, non-judgmental environment in which respondents can indicate freely about their behaviours, perceptions, and/or thoughts. Whether or not you have personal experiences with this form of behaviour, I am interested in collecting your perceptions and/or thoughts. This means that no admission of conduct will be needed – that is, hypothetical responses are acceptable since the study's interest is in perceptions and not real, personal encounters. Additionally, nothing that you indicate in the questionnaire by way of survey response will be identified to you in any way. The study is completely anonymous and participant anonymity is guaranteed.

Your participation in my research will involve one online questionnaire lasting around 10-15 minutes. The questionnaire will be conducted through a survey managing webpage platform called *SurveyMonkey*. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. Before participating in the study, you are free to ask any questions you may have to the following email address: jin.lee1@uoit.net. If you are satisfied with the basic tenants of this study, you will be provided with a consent form outlining more information about the study, which you can then consent to if you agree to partake in the research.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research project.

CHECKBOX: "I have read and understood the focus of this study and choose to proceed with the questionnaire"

This study has been approved by the UOIT Research Ethics Board REB #15-133 on July 25, 2016 .

Appendix 3: Consent Form

CONSENSUAL SEXTING TO REVENGE PORN TRANSFORMATION

REB # 15-133

University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Department of Criminology, Justice and Policy Studies
2000 Simcoe St. North,
Oshawa Ontario Canada L1R 3H4

My name is Jin R. Lee and I am a Criminology graduate student in the faculty of Social Science and Humanities at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. I am conducting research about consent and the sharing of (intimate) digital images. The study is fundamentally interested in your perceptions as to why you think individuals would disseminate intimate digital images without consent. I invite you to participate in this research study. The study consists of one online questionnaire (35 questions) and will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. You are free to choose whether or not you want to partake in this research project, as participation is completely voluntary. You may also choose to end your participation at any time during the research study. Your responses to the questionnaire will not be shared with anyone else for any reason. Only I will have access to the data and it will not include any personally identifying information. However, given that the data will be gathered through the SurveyMonkey platform, all data collected from this study is and will be stored on servers located in the United States. Under the U.S. law, specifically the Patriots Act, the U.S. government can access data that you provide if the government requests that data. In spite of this, I ensure that all survey responses and information will be kept anonymous.

Please note that since the study is completely anonymously, once the questionnaire has been engaged with, withdrawing responses cannot be achieved because of the unidentifiable nature of their responses. If participants exit and/or withdraw from the study before fully completing its entirety, the data entered will still be used for the purposes of the study. All data collected from the study will be securely stored indefinitely for both the current study and future studies. For protection, the external hard-drive will be stored securely in a safe with a combination lock, as well as have a password set so only I will have access to its contents. It is hoped that the results of this study will help create a better understanding of how people act in certain circumstances involving the sharing and disseminating of privatized and/or intimate digital images online. The results of this research will be presented and reported in the form of academic papers and presentations.

Please note that the questionnaire will ask you to discuss your perceptions about disseminating intimate digital images. While any information you share will be anonymous, there is a minimal risk of some minor emotional and/or psychological distress caused by recalling these events. Should you become uncomfortable during the questionnaire, please remember that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Should you feel the need to speak with a mental health professional, these are some resources for assistance: Durham Mental Health (905-666-0483 or 1-800-742-1890); Canadian Mental Health Association (Mental Health Hotline at 1-866-531-2600); Canadian Mental Health Distress Centre (416-408-4357); and NeepHelpNow (<https://needhelpnow.ca/app/en>, which specifically offers assistance for victims of cyberbullying and related issues of having sexual images posted).

Please note that by consenting to participate in this study, participants are not waiving any right to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm. If you have any questions concerning the

research study or experience any discomfort related to the study, please contact me at [jin.lee1@uoit.net](mailto:jlin.lee1@uoit.net). Any questions regarding your rights as a participant, complaints or adverse events may be addressed to Research Ethics Board through the Ethics and Compliance Officer – researchethics@uoit.ca or 905.721.8668 x. 3693.

CHECKBOX: “I have read, acknowledge, and consent to the process of this study as a participant”

CHECKBOX: “I consent to the use of my survey responses in both the current academic study and any future secondary studies and scholarly publications”

This study has been approved by the UOIT Research Ethics Board REB #15-133 on July 25, 2016.

Tables

TABLE 1: Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristic	Study Sample (n=63)
Sex:	
Female	66.67% (n=42)
Male	33.33% (n=21)
Student Status:	
Student	61.90% (n=39)
Non-Student	38.10% (n=24)
Age:	
18-25	82.54% (n=52)
26-30	12.70% (n=8)
31-40	1.59% (n=1)
41+	3.17% (n=2)
Race:	
Caucasian	41.27% (n=26)
Black	7.94% (n=5)
East Asian	33.33% (n=21)
South Asian	1.59% (n=1)
West Indian/Caribbean	4.76% (n=3)
Bi-Racial/Other	11.11% (n=7)
Sexual Orientation:	
Heterosexual	85.72% (n=54)
Homosexual	4.76% (n=3)
Bisexual	4.76% (n=3)
Asexual	3.17% (n=2)
Pansexual	1.59% (n=1)
Current Relationship Status:	
Single	41.27% (n=26)
Dating	49.21% (n=31)
Engaged	3.17% (n=2)
Married	6.35% (n=4)
Romantic Relationship History:	
Yes	82.54 (n=52)
No	17.46% (n=11)

TABLE 2: Definition of terms provided in questionnaire

Term	Definition
“Sharing”	“Uploading, disseminating, showing/flashing, or sending of digital pictures from one party to another”

“Non-consensually”	“Not having the permission of the individual(s) in question. In other words, in a party of more than one individual, if even one person does not grant permission to conduct a given act and/or behavior, that agreement would be bound as being committed non-consensually”
“Non-intimate digital images”	“Any image captured and produced electronically (cameras, computers, phones, etc.) that does not have nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While deeming something as sexual is subjective, the term “non-intimate” here refers to the general, sexual nature of the content being displayed (i.e. a graduation photo of an individual with a convocation gown would be classified as non-intimate because it does not bear a sexual connotation, nor shows an individual being nude or semi-nude)”
“Intimate digital images”	“Any image depicting nude, semi-nude, or otherwise sexually provocative content. While the image does not have to be sexual, the image does have to be sexually provocative (i.e. while a female holding an ice cream cone may not be sexual, if she is captured as licking the ice cream, it could be classified as being sexually provocative)”
“Share on own device”	“Letting them view the images as it appears on your own device”

TABLE 3: Hypothetical Scenarios of Image Sharing

Type of Image Sharing/Consent Involved	Recipient of Images	
	Peers	Romantic Partner
Intimate Images of Oneself/Someone else with Consent	Yes: 11.11% (n=7) No: 77.78% (n=49) Indifferent: 11.11% (n=7)	Yes: 55.56% (n=35) No: 34.92% (n=22) Indifferent: 9.52% (n=6)
Intimate Images of Oneself/Someone else without Consent	Yes: 3.17 (n=2) No: 96.83% (n=61)	Yes: 22.22% (n=14) No: 77.78% (n=49)
Non-Intimate Images of Oneself/Someone else with Consent	Yes: 82.54% (n=52) No: 11.11% (n=7) Indifferent: 6.35% (n=4)	Yes: 92.07% (n=58) No: 3.17% (n=2) Indifferent: 4.76% (n=3)
Non-Intimate Images of Oneself/Someone else without Consent	Yes: 58.73% (n=37) No: 41.27% (n=26)	Yes: 68.25% (n=43) No: 31.75% (n=20)

TABLE 4: Image Sharing Based on Content and Recipient

Type of Images and Recipient	Study Sample (n=63)
Intimate Images of Peers to Romantic Partner	Yes: 15.87% (n=10) No: 84.13% (n=53)
Intimate Images of Romantic Partner to Peers	Yes: 6.35% (n=4) No: 93.65% (n=59)
Non-Intimate Images of Peers to Romantic Partner	Yes: 80.95% (n=51) No: 19.05% (n=12)
Non-Intimate Images of Romantic Partner to Peers	Yes: 80.95% (n=51) No: 19.05% (n=12)

TABLE 5: Image Sharing Based on Medium Involved

Type of Medium Involved	Non-Intimate Images of Peers	Intimate Images of Peers	Non-Intimate Images of Romantic Partner	Intimate Images of Romantic Partner
Social Media	Yes: 82.54% (n=52) No: 17.46% (n=11)	Yes: 6.35% (n=4) No: 93.65% (n=59)	Yes: 84.13% (n=53) No: 15.87% (n=10)	Yes: 6.35% (n=4) No: 93.65% (n=59)
Own Device Flashing	Yes: 85.71% (n=54) No: 14.29% (n=9)	Yes: 12.70% (n=8) No: 87.30% (n=55)	Yes: 92.06% (n=58) No: 7.94% (n=5)	Yes: 7.94% (n=5) No: 92.06% (n=58)
Sending File	_____	Yes: 4.76% (n=3) No: 95.24% (n=60)	_____	Yes: 6.35% (n=4) No: 93.65% (n=59)